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SIPDIS

DEPARTMENT FOR NEA/I

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TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [KDEM](#) [PHUM](#) [IZ](#)  
SUBJECT: PRT KIRKUK: CAMPAIGN PERIOD OFF TO A ROCKY START  
REF: BAGHDAD 381

11. (U) This is a Kirkuk Provincial Reconstruction Team (PRT) message.

12. (C) Summary. The Kirkuk Campaign period started poorly on the evening of February 11. Within hours after IHEC lifted the curfew on campaign activities, the Iraqi Police (IP) received numerous complaints about violations of IHEC rules, politically-motivated vandalism, intimidation, and threats of armed violence. In coordination with the PRT and the U.S. military, the Governor of Kirkuk called an emergency meeting of all political party leaders in Kirkuk on February 13 to demand an end to the escalating cycle of tension and to remind them that they would be judged by the behavior of their party members and supporters. The Deputy Provincial Governor asked party leaders to publicly sign a code of conduct agreeing to implement IHEC requirements fully and pledging to refrain from violence and intimidation. End Summary.

13. (C) On the evening of February 11, the brigade commander of the U.S. 1/1 Armored Division in Kirkuk received an urgent call from Gen. Turhan Abdulrahman, Deputy IP Commander for Kirkuk city, stating that he had received numerous calls from party leaders complaining of politically motivated acts of vandalism and violence had occurred within a short period after IHEC lifted the curfew on political activity. Gen. Turhan asked for support and guidance. 1/1 BCT Commander and PRToffs called the provincial governor (PGOV) to urge him to convene an emergency meeting to address concerns and push party leaders to refrain from violence and intimidation. By late evening, all local parties except the KDP had agreed, claiming that the level of tension and threat of violence in the city was increasing rapidly. (Note: Local KDP leadership told PRToffs they are under orders from the national party leadership to limit contact with the U.S. until a formal apology over the events in Ninewah is issued. (Reftel) End Note).

14. (C) On February 13, the Provincial Governor hosted a meeting with the Deputy Governor, Provincial Council Chair, members of the Provincial Council, and a broad representation of the political leadership - Iraqqiya, Islamic Supreme Council of Iraq, Patriotic Union of Kurdistan, Goran, Iraqi Turkoman Front, Christian Democratic Movement, and Da'wa, among others. Only the Kurdistan Democratic Party refused to attend. The Governor reminded the parties that they had an important role in maintaining security in the province. He noted that the international community was watching of the election in Kirkuk closely, and that they had a responsibility to the people of the province to ensure that the image they had worked hard to present to the world was not destroyed. The Governor added that the parties were all aware of IHEC rules and standards and he expected compliance.

15. (C) IP's Gen. Jamal accused the group that some parties had engaged in activities that were undemocratic and even

"uncivilized." He briefed on the security arrangements for elections, noting that the IP would be in charge of security in the city and that he was setting up a centralized operations center for reporting security violations and problems. U.S. Division-North Deputy Commanding General told the group that the U.S. would be present in support of the Iraq security forces in compliance with the security agreement. The Governor promised to organize a meeting with IHEC after Tuesday's election security meeting to help parties understand and interpret the regulations. The Deputy Governor told the parties that he wanted them to publicly sign a code of conduct to fully abide by IHEC requirements and refrain from violence and intimidation during the campaign.

¶6. (C) After the meeting, PGov told PRToffs that he thought the meeting went well, but that he was worried by the high level of tension on only the second day of the campaign. He expressed frustration that although the Office of the Governor had limited authority, people had been conditioned by the previous regime to believe the governor had unlimited power. He said he would not be able to keep things under control alone, and asked for the PRT's help as an honest broker to encourage responsible behavior from the major coalitions.

¶7. (C) Comment: After a tense weekend, the meeting was an important step in keeping the province calm during the campaign period. Given the level of frustration and mistrust displayed during the meeting, however, it became clear that maintaining a secure, democratic election process will take a lot of work from all sides, including the U.S., to keep the sharp rhetoric and provocations, which are likely to continue, from devolving into violence. End Comment.  
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